

Traditional Handicrafts in Viet Nam

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Introduction

Viet Nam's traditional handicrafts have an age-old history. Many are famous inside and outside the country not only for their high aesthetic value but also for their local cultural imprints.



Nearly a thousand craft villages nationwide make a wide range of durable and aesthetically pleasing products out of familiar natural materials such as clay, bamboo and rattan, stone, wood and metal.



Traditional craft village offers tourists the chance of seeing peaceful landscape, visiting production workshops and meeting with skilful artisans. A fascinating extra includes the opportunity to make an item under the guidance of craftsmen.

Bronze Casting

Casting bronze objects requires general knowledge of art, sculpture, jewellery making, and lots of experience.



The process of bronze casting includes different stages, from mould shaping, mixing materials to casting and engraving. Among well-known bronze casting villages are Ngu Xa in Ha Noi, Dai Bai in Bac Ninh, Yen in Nam Dinh, Phu Xuan in Hue and Phuoc Kieu in Quang Nam.

Silk Weaving

Foreign tourists love Vietnamese silk products for their high quality, beautiful designs and reasonable price. Well-known silk-making villages are Van Phuc in Ha Tay Province, Ma Chau in Quang Nam Province and Tan Chau in An Giang.



Typical famous handicrafts in Viet Nam

Embroidery

Embroidery making requires high skills in using needles and coloured threads, to create lively artistic products. Quat Dong in Ha Tay Province and Van Lam in Ninh Binh Province, Thuan Loc in Hue, Da Lat in Lam Dong are among the leading embroidery villages in Viet Nam.



Brocade Weaving

Dyes and natural fibres constitute the two most important elements of brocade weaving. The weaving process is manually done. Brocade products feature colourful and beautiful patterns typical of each ethnic group. Several localities famous for their brocade products are Cao Bang, Lao Cai, Ninh Thuan, An Giang and the Central Highlands.



Typical famous handicrafts in Viet Nam

Mat Making

Sedge, jute and a loom are what is needed to make mats. This handicraft requires discreet selection of the materials, dying and weaving it, as well as the harmonious affords of the weaver and the person who feeds the sedge into the loom.



Good mats are recognized by their even and thick sedge and strong stitches. The famous mat making villages are Hung Ha in Thai Binh, Kim Son in Ninh Binh, Nga Son in Thanh Hoa, Cam Ne in Da Nang and Dinh Yen in Dong Thap, to name just some.

Bamboo and rattan Weaving



Thanks to the skilful hands of the artisans, materials available in Vietnam, such as bamboo and rattan, are turned into beautifully designed products. Typical bamboo and rattan weaving villages include Phu Vinh, Ninh So in Ha Tay Province and Quang Xuong, Quang Phong in Thanh Hoa Province, Dan Che in Ha Tinh, Ba La in Hue, and Thai My in Ho Chi Minh City.

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Bonsai Growing

Bonsai growing is an elegant pastime of the Vietnamese people. Bonsai represents noble dignity and creativity of the artisans.

Bonsai plants can be shaped in various forms, each form carries its own meaning: elder brother-younger brother, mother-father, mother-child, ascending dragon, five good lucks and so on. Quang Ba in Ha Noi, Vi Khe in Nam Dinh, Kim Long in Hue, Nui Thanh in Da Nang, Cai Mon in Ben Tre, and Sa Dec in Dong Thap are among the famous bonsai growing villages.



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Conical palm-leaf hat Making

Many a visitor returns home from Viet Nam with a conical palm-leaf hat as a souvenir. The elegant conical palm-leaf hat (*non*) is made out of easily found and abundantly available materials.



Visiting Chuong Village in Ha Tay or Mao Dien Village in Hai Duong, Phu Cam in Hue or some other areas in Ha Tinh, Quang Binh, one comes to the very place of *non* making in Viet Nam.

Folk Painting

Folk painting has an age-old history in Viet Nam. The artists, usually farmers or merchants who inherit their skill from their ancestors, use natural colors to paint on *do* paper.



The content of folk painting often features the production and spiritual activities in daily life, the aspiration for happiness and prosperity of the people, and criticizes the bad habits and customs in society. Dong Ho Village in Bac Ninh, Hang Trong in Ha Noi and Sinh Village in Thua Thien-Hue are among the most important must-sees if tourists want to know more about this handicraft.



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Jewellery Making

Jewellery making is the art of making charms, trinkets and jewellery from precious stones like gold, silver, or platinum. In jewellery making, there are specialized craftsmen who shape the patterns, engrave to make these patterns become relief, chisel them out and polish them. Goldsmiths must pay attention to each and every detail when putting the finishing touches to the products.

Dinh Cong in Ha Noi, Dong Xam in Thai Binh and Chau Khe in Hai Duong are the most famous jewellery making villages in Viet Nam.



Stone Carving

Sculptors use simple tools like hammers and chisels to breathe life into soulless rocks. Old stele, worshipping objects, and statues of various shapes and sizes are products of the artisans from Ngu Hanh Son in Da Nang , Ninh Hai, Ninh Van in Ninh Binh and Nhoi Village in Thanh Hoa, etc.



Woodcarving and mother-of-pearl inlaying

The craft of woodcarving and mother-of-pearl inlaying demands patience, diligence and dexterity. Mother-of-pearl inlaying is the process of putting pieces of different types of shells into the carved images. Woodcarving is the process to make raised pattern in the wooden surface.

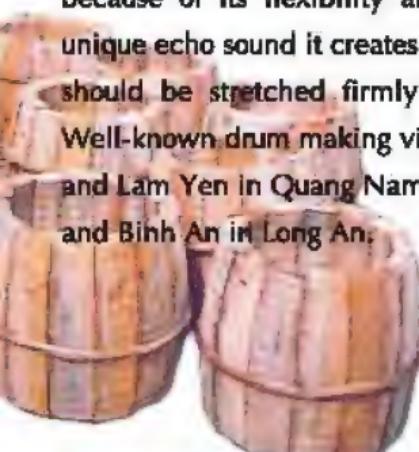


A finished woodcarving inlaid with mother-of-pearl has high artistic value. Among prestigious woodcarving villages are Dong Ky in Bac Ninh, Chuyen My in Ha Tay, La Xuyen in Nam Dinh, and Kim Bong in Quang Nam.



Drum Making

The process of drum making starts with the drum-cylinder followed by shaping, leather tanning and finishes with drumhead stretching. Apart from being diligent and dexterous, the artisans need to be experienced and have their own know-how. The hollow cylinder should be made from jackfruit wood because of its flexibility and residual qualities, and for the unique echo sound it creates. The membrane made from leather should be stretched firmly and evenly over the drumhead. Well-known drum making villages include Doi Tam in Ha Nam and Lam Yen in Quang Nam, and Binh An in Long An.



Lacquer Painting

Lacquer painting is one of Viet Nam's most unique handicrafts. Its main material is taken from wax-trees. As lacquer painting requires three stages of making frames, drawing and grinding, the products can be expensive. Lacquer products are varied, ranging from pictures, worshipping objects, handicrafts to daily household objects. Ha Thai Village in Ha Tay and Tuong Binh Hiep Village in Binh Duong are known for their mass production of high quality lacquer objects.



Typical famous handicrafts in Viet Nam

Lanterns Making

Coming to Hoi An, tourists are often impressed by the beautiful silk lanterns in "the nights of ancient Hoi An streets." Hoi An silk lanterns bear many shapes, including a ball, a bulb of garlic, or a cylinder.



Hoi An lanterns come in a variety of sizes and designs, depending on the purposes for their use. The worshipping lanterns often have Chinese or Nom script. Those used during Tet holiday usually have the Chinese characters which mean Prosperity, Longevity and Happiness. Others that are used to decorate the house often have parallel sentences.



Ceramic Making



Porcelain and ceramic making has a long history of development in Viet Nam, which is closely connected to the daily life of the people. Though varied in shape and size, colour and design, Vietnamese ceramics still retain the traditional style and unique enamels.

The best known ceramic making villages are Bat Trang in Ha Noi, Huong Canh in Vinh Phuc, Tho Ha in Bac Giang, Phu Lang in Bac Ninh, Dong Trieu in Quang Ninh, Thanh Ha in Quang Nam, Bau Truc in Ninh Thuan and other villages in Dong Nai and Binh Duong.



